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Call to Mural Artists for a Community Engagement/International Arts Exchange

Meridian International Center – a non-profit based in Washington, DC – is now accepting applications for the 2015-2016 Community Engagement through the Arts Exchange Program for American muralists.

Funded by the U.S. Department of State's Cultural Programs Division in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and with programming support from Meridian, four American artists will travel abroad to collaborate with local youth and underserved populations on community-based mural projects.

Artists will design, implement and administer a 3.5-week, in-country program based on local community issues for the country specified. Projects should be designed to advance U.S. foreign policy goals in that country by addressing a local community issue, such as youth or women's empowerment, gender-based violence, social inclusion, regional stability, and the environment.

Meridian is currently accepting applications for projects in Brazil, Cuba, India, and Turkey. Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. EST on March 31.

Apply online at: www.callforentry.org (search for international mural).

PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

The Three Rs at work in Montana

Public Value Partnership grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call “The Three Rs” to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana's non-profit arts organizations:

- Building relationships;
- Creating greater relevance and meaning; and
- Establishing return on investment (measured both as economic vitality and impact on people's lives).

MAC believes that using “The Three Rs” strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We'd like to share some of the best examples of these stories with you from 2013:

nationally in this study.

According to the latest results, Missoula's nonprofit arts organizations constitute a \$39.9 million industry, providing 1,455 FTE jobs, \$30 million in household income, and \$3.3 million in state and local revenue. These numbers are comparable with those of Boise, Tacoma, and Eugene – cities far larger.

In addition, the implications for cultural tourism are significant as well. Tourists spend an average of \$52 (not including admission) in arts-related spending, such as restaurants, hotels and transportation, compared to the national average of \$40. The full study can be found at www.missoula-cultural.org/2012ArtsandProsperityReportforMissoula.pdf.

This study was highlighted in the *Missoulian* on June 30, 2012, and in an editorial on July 8, 2012 (missoulian.com). This study and the publicity around it fueled a continued interest in the connection between art and our local economic health throughout the year.

Randy Cohen of Americans for the Arts visited Missoula in late September 2012 to discuss this study and its implications.

The arts community now seems ready to leverage this

study for continued community discussion about Missoula's future. In contrast with previous public opinion about the relationship between art and the economy, people now seem to understand the connection. According to Larry Swanson, economist and director of the O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West, “Arts is the key for Missoula economically.”



Whitefish Theatre Company: The On Ensemble presents an outreach program to Whitefish Middle School students.

Building Relationships

Whitefish Theatre Company: Whitefish Theatre Co. performed a Black Curtain Readers' Theatre presentation of “Lombardi.” Whitefish Credit Union, a local business and a strong supporter of the organization, asked if we would hold a special performance for its employees.

“Lombardi” represented strong individualism and inspirational leadership and the Credit Union management wanted to bring this performance to its staff members. More than 70 employees and management personnel attended the special performance held at the O'Shaughnessy Center. The events provided WTC with a new avenue for building relationships with our audience and supporters.

Return on Investment: Economic Vitality

Missoula Cultural Council: In the spring of 2012 Americans for the Arts released *Arts and Economic Prosperity IV: the Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts Organizations and their Audiences*. As with the previous three studies, MCC coordinated the Missoula information, and Missoula was the lone Montana community to join the other 182 groups



Missoula Cultural Council: Executive Director Tom Bensen welcomes 200 attendees to the MCC Cultural Achievement Awards Luncheon, March 26, 2013. The annual event honors individuals and businesses whose outstanding work in the arts and humanities have made significant contributions to the community's quality of life. (Photo by Jonathan Qualben)



Hamilton Players: Molly and her stage mother, April Johnson, perform in the production, “The Women.”

Return on Investment: Impact on people's lives

Hamilton Players: The Hamilton Players Youth Theater Program touches hundreds of lives each year, creating stronger community members by developing and encouraging self-confidence, self-esteem, and social skills. One such story is exemplified by the following letter, received from a youth theater school participant's parent:

Dear Hamilton Players,
Today I had the great joy of accompanying my daughter to a school function. Normally she doesn't like to go to these things but was insistent that we go. So of course I jumped at the chance to take her.

Once inside I was met by one of her teachers who pulled me aside and wanted to tell me how much Molly had changed over the course of the year. They couldn't believe how this once painfully shy girl could have bloomed into this talkative, confident young girl.

One of her other teachers then joined our conversation and told us that she had seen Molly in her play and how blown away she was by the fact that Molly was not only standing up on that stage, but was really good at what she was doing.

I wanted to take a moment to share this story with you because as a parent hearing such things is so wonderful that you want to share them with the people who helped make them possible.

Molly auditioned for a play at the playhouse two years ago and had trouble standing on the stage, but Denise Rose cast her in the chorus. This year she auditioned for another play, and stood up on that stage without any fear and was cast in one of the lead roles.

I am very confident when I say that had she not been given the chance to stand up on the stage two years ago, she never would have auditioned for another play, or had the confidence she does now in her classroom.

Thank you! You provide an invaluable service to the community.

The Hamilton Players note, “Molly has turned into an amazing young actress and is a wonderful asset to our production process. She is responsible and dependable with a wicked sharp sense of humor!”

Making a case for the Montana Artrepreneur Program

By Sheri Jarvis
Montana Artrepreneur
Program Director

Artists are, by nature, inventors, engineers, explorers, and discoverers. Artists see possibility everywhere. To monetize that brilliance, however, is often the most daunting task for an artist, and talking about money is usually a conversation that most artists try their best to avoid.

Resistance to thinking and talking about money is not a character flaw, but it is frustrating to anyone with a natural mind for business. It seems so simple! “You're so talented, why don't you make (fill in the blank)? You could make a fortune selling (fill in the blank)!”

As inventors, the last thing an artist needs is advice on what to make. What artists do need, however, are practical business tools to reach



Sheri Jarvis

achievable goals of earning the money they deserve for the incredible work they do, and affirmation of “artist” as a credible profession. That's where the Montana Artrepreneur Program (MAP) comes in, and it's been working well for Montana artists across the state for several years.

Nationwide, the resources to help artists gain credibility as working professionals are increasing and the idea of helping artists become successful entrepreneurs has hit the mainstream. Artists are finally being recognized as small business owners and savvy business gurus have lined up to help.

Google “art business coaching” and “make money making art” and the lists of resources are endless. The cost of services varies and some online resources promise to transform your career with a free webinar and one-hour consult. What could be easier?

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